

Big Cypress Watersheds Restoration Coordination Team

Friday, September 9th, 2011 – 1:00 p.m. – 3:15 p.m.
Rookery Bay National Estuarine Research Reserve, Naples

Meeting Minutes

1. Welcome/Call to Order

- ◆ Megan Andresen called the meeting to order at 1:15 p.m. and welcomed everyone to the Rookery Bay National Estuarine Research Reserve.
- ◆ Minutes from the last meeting were reviewed and accepted.

2. Introduction of Members

Ananta Nath, BCB SFWMD
Bob Sobczak, NPS
Sue Leitholf, RBNERR
Mike Savarese, FGCU

Mac Hatcher, Collier County
Megan Andresen, BCW-RCT/FGCU
Daryl Thomas, USFWS
Kim Dryden, USFWS

3. Watershed Team Retrospective – Bob Sobczak

- ◆ Bob announced that Megan's funding will be up at the end of September and her plans are to move to Iowa to start an aquaponics business with her family.
- ◆ Bob shared a document which outlines the past accomplishments of the BCW-RCT and possibilities for the future of the group, as discussed in the May 6th meeting. He noted that the purpose of this working document was to see how the group has operated in the past in order to determine the most appropriate plan of action for the future.
 - Daryl Thomas added that a lot of the projects identified by the group were funded and completed and the group had a major impact in directing attention to important projects that needed funding.
 - Mike Savarese also commented that the greatest accomplishment of the BCW-RCT is that it provided regional recognition to the Southwest Florida.
 - Kim Dryden agreed, noting that we need to highlight the fact that the group is still intact and that we still have plans which need to be pushed through for funding.

4. Keeping the Watershed Team Relevant

- ◆ Bob proposed the creation of a "Swamp Binder" to be updated on a quarterly basis which would provide the group's mission statement, restoration science needs list, maps, Watershed Editorials, etc., and presented a draft "Swamp Binder" to the group. This binder could be utilized as a resource for presenting project ideas to funding agencies.
- ◆ Kim discussed that the BCW-RCT and its respective member organizations have created multiple restoration project needs lists and now is the time for those projects to be funded and implemented. Funds have been diminished, but there is money available. It takes a group of people with different plans, such as the BCW-RCT, that are ready to take action and present prioritized projects that have multi-agency support. Some projects are small scale and cheap, but they are also essential to the watershed.

- ◆ Kim suggested that the group compile a spreadsheet of all the restoration projects presented in agency watershed management lists and highlight the common projects and those where matching funds may be possible.
 - Mike commented that Kim is proposing a new purpose for the BCW-RCT as a group which promotes prioritized projects in order to direct limited funds and efforts to certain restoration science needs of Southwest Florida.
- ◆ Mike outlined the new mission of the group:
 - 1) Promoters of science-based restoration projects that have already been prioritized highly by our representative organizations (by consensus). “Water-Resource Restoration Needs”
 - 2) Produce our own marketing pieces...”Translation” documents for decision-makers and the public.
 - 3) Continue serving as an information-sharing and networking consortium for the Big Cypress Watershed.
 - 4) Get individuals and their respective agencies back to the table.
- ◆ Bob stated that responsibilities need to be divided up and everyone needs to play a lead role in order for the new mission to work.
 - Kim and Daryl agreed to focus their efforts on item 1 of the new mission and asked the group to send them 2-3 detailed, prioritized project ideas which are referenced in a project plan.
 - Bob suggested that item 2 be produced by individual members of the group, based on project ideas. Kim noted that “coffee table”-type reports are very good marketing tools.
 - Bob agreed to work on items 5-6 by continuing his watershed journal and updating the “Swamp Binder”.
- ◆ Mike noted the importance of targeting the right people to be in attendance at the next meeting because it will be an opportunity for agencies to promote project ideas, their value, and projected costs. Important decisions will be made that influence multiple agencies. It will also be an opportunity for agencies to justify jobs.
- ◆ The BCW team has developed critical restoration science projects in Southwest Florida since 1996. Now is the time to move from planning to implementation.

5. Other Watershed News

- ◆ The 21st Annual Southwest Florida Water Resources Conference will be held November 18-19th at the Naples Botanical Garden.
- ◆ There will be a GIS Symposium held at Rookery Bay on November 9th.
- ◆ The first annual Florida Panther Festival will be held October 29th at the North Collier Regional Park. Optional field trips into panther territory are available on Friday, October 28. Various fees apply to field trips. The October 29 festival is free.

6. Set Next Meeting Date and Adjourn meeting

- ◆ The meeting was adjourned at 3:15 p.m.
- ◆ **Next Meeting: Wednesday, October 5th, 2011, 1:00 p.m.**
 - Location: Comfort Inn & Suites, 3860 Tollgate Boulevard, Naples, FL
 - Happy hour to follow at the Comfort Inn.